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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA  
Subregional Office for the Caribbean

DRAFT PROJECT\*

CREOLE DISCOURSE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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## DRAFT PROJECT

Project Title: Creole Discourse and Social Development  
Project Headquarters: CEPAL Office for the Caribbean, Port of Spain  
Duration: Six years  
Financing Organisation:  
Executive Agency: CEPAL Office for the Caribbean, Port of Spain

### 1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Creole languages are the most formidable indigenous resources of the Caribbean region and the most important popular devices to counteract the balkanisation processes imposed by centuries of colonisation. Self-reliance, self-propelled development and popular participation cannot be achieved without their extensive use.

The Project derives from the set of Guidelines contained in the CDCC Constituent Declaration (E/CEPAL/G/1132) and in the Strategy for the Caribbean Countries during the Third Development Decade (E/CEPAL/CDCC/61 Rev.1). This last document carries very specific orientations and inter alia it has foreseen for the present decade:

"Assessment and reform of the substantive content of formal and informal educational systems, with an aim not only of upgrading efforts at mental de-colonization but also of achieving more cohesiveness:

- encouragement of the use of local/national languages and the circulation of cultural production emanating from minority groups;
- encouragement of the use of local and Caribbean themes in formal and informal educational systems; diversification of inputs to the mass media as a currency-saving mechanism and as an instrument to foster self-reliance and mutual understanding;
- systematic experimentation aimed at designing adequate methods and techniques to disseminate development issues through the media and to increase the public awareness of the challenges facing the countries and the subregion as a whole;" (p.14)

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The long-term goal of the Project is to assist in setting up the structures for self-propelled development, by ensuring a self-reliant openness of the region. The proposed venture is pan-Caribbean in its scope and intends to further extend its range of action to the Caribbean diaspora. In the present circumstances an unequal exchange with the outer world is triggered by the one-sided emphasis on the official languages. The use of official languages allows immediate contacts between the Caribbean and the outer world, and at the same time hinders dialogue within each country and between culturally related populations. The development of the vernaculars will ease access to the official languages and their control by the population, the mobilization of local resources, discussion and adaptation of cultural loans; it will also facilitate the expression of Caribbean aspiration without affecting their distinctiveness. Processes of minoration and banalisation of Caribbean people and their produce will be reversed.

In the long term (six and more years), the Project aims at developing the medium term objectives for the English lexicon based Creoles.

In the medium term (three to five years), the Project aims at developing for the French lexicon based Creoles:

- stylistic forms and vocabularies suitable for the dissemination of science and technology;
- adequate forms of speech for popular participation, rural development programme, vocational and co-operative education, mass campaigns on public health, environmental protection, control of pests and plant diseases, preventive measures to deal with recurrent natural disasters, etc;
- female involvement - particularly rural women - in the enrichment of Caribbean discourse and most specially in the development of conceptual instruments needed for training prospective "higglers" and "traffickers" in accounting and other commercial arts at primary and secondary school levels;
- suitable environment for the assessment of cultural contents conveyed by the mass media and for their utilisation to foster social cohesion and Caribbean identity;
- suitable environment for upgrading of local traditional institutions (sousou, gayap, coupd'main, combite, larose, etc.), and for their increased use to provide community services.

The short-term objectives (one to three years) of the Project refer to:

- the training of literates in reading, writing and transcript of vernaculars;
- the assistance to on-going educational reform - specially literacy and post-literacy programmes - and the improvement of reaching of reading in plurilingual and multilingual environments;
- the preparation of basic materials appropriate to the situation of each country dealing with public adult education (co-operative education, agricultural extension, basic human biology, guide for early warning systems and emergency measures in case of natural disasters, environmental protection, etc.);
- the stimulation of inter-comprehension between the different French lexicon based Creoles;
- the organization of experimental conferences on French lexicon based Creole discourse and establishment of the basis for a similar venture for the English and Portuguese lexicon based Creoles;
- the development of different styles of Creole discourses (scientific, didactic, novelistic, for the purpose of propaganda and advertisement, information, etc.);
- the publication of readily understandable scientific and technological information;
- the stimulation of the creation of an informed public opinion and the enlargement of the reach of the media;
- the stimulation of publication of creative writings and of textbooks for literacy and post-literacy programmes, for primary and adult education, geared towards rural and marginal urban areas evolving in intercultural and plurilingual situations, as well as translations from one Creole to another of the above-mentioned publications;
- the organization of a network of specialists comprising Caribbean linguists, economists and sociologists/anthropologists to provide technical assistance to governments in the Caribbean and abroad, engaged in literacy programmes and permanent education for plurilingual and multicultural Caribbean enclaves (such as in Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, the United States and Canada);
- the establishment of close contact with linguists specialised in Creole discourse located in the Indian Ocean, Europe, United States of America and Canada.

### 3. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

#### a. Corpus

- retrieval and documentation of topic-specific vocabularies relating to e.g. diseases, agricultural activities, litigation, masonry, carpentry, etc.;
- retrieval and documentation of folktales;
- collection of Creole publications, with special emphasis on drama and novels;
- collection of proceedings and minutes of workshops and training courses carried out by the Project;
- establishment of a similar corpus of English lexicon based Creoles (to be carried out from the fourth year of the Project onwards);

#### b. Processing

- these data will be catalogued and indexed with a view of producing topic-specific glossaries and word lists;
- preparation of secretaries, typists, translators, interpreters, transcribers and editors to service meetings and workshops of the Project.

#### c. First level output

- handbooks of terminology (e.g. media terminology, agricultural extension terminology, vocational training terminology, etc.);
- inter-island glossaries;
- annotated collections of folktales;
- annotated collections of drama and novels.

#### d. Second level output

- public information: production of canned programmes for broadcasting purposes;
- creative writings: production of translated drama and novels, particularly from Caribbean authors;
- social engineering: production of guidelines and handbooks relating to disaster preparedness, health campaigns, use of banking facilities, vocational training, etc.;
- research and development: grammar of individual dialects, comparative grammar for non specialist use;
- expansion of public knowledge of writing system (preparation of publicity materials to popularize the use of written languages and for public information purposes;

e. Training and assessment

- public information: workshop for broadcasters, scriptwriters, editors, etc.;
- creative writing: workshop for dramatists and writers;
- social engineering: workshops for agricultural extensionists, health officers, staff of rural development banks, vocational training teachers, etc.;
- research and development: workshops of linguists and social scientists;
- public knowledge of writing system: workshop of advertising agency personnel, public relation officers, etc.

4. PARTICIPATING REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

The Project is designed to strengthen the few Caribbean institutions dealing with the peculiar linguistic structure of the region and to revert the process of banalisation of the most complex and exclusive Caribbean form of expression. It is therefore open to specialised institutions in the field, and to those which may be created in the Caribbean during the life span of the Project.

A small workshop should be convened to establish the Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries (TCDC) character of the Project. Representatives of the Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches de la Créolophonie (GEREC, Martinique), of the Folk Research Centre and the Caribbean Research Centre (St. Lucia) of the Dominica Council for Cultural Development, of the Institut Pédagogique National and Centre de Pédagogie Appliquée (Haiti), as well as linguists of the Universities of the West Indies, of Guyana and of Suriname, specialised in French lexicon based Creoles, will be invited to collaborate with the Project. A minimum joint Work Programme will be drawn up to meet the short-term objectives, if the financial resources are adequate.

The Project is intended as a development project and not as an educational project. It will service Caribbean Institutions such as OECS, CARICOM, CDB, Caribbean Environmental Programme (UNEP), Caribbean Tourism Centre, and any other governmental, non-governmental, regional or national institutions.

United Nations Agencies such as ILO, UNICEF, WHO/PAHO, UNESCO with on-going activities in the Caribbean may wish to utilize its services.

5. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

The Project calls for the establishment within the CDCC Secretariat/ CEPAL Office for the Caribbean, of a special section within the Social Affairs Unit for the development of Creole Discourse. The Secretariat will ensure that the Project maintains its developmental dimension by assisting the different CDCC, CARICOM, CDB, and other development projects with a component of popular participation.

The CDCC Secretariat will administer the funds for the Project and elaborate special measures to train the institution which will service the conferences and workshops, taking into account that the working languages of these events will not be a United Nations official language.



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